

Clarke County Economic Development Advisory Committee  
September 20, 2017 Minutes

A meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) held in the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Wednesday, September 20, 2017, at 1:00 PM.

Board: Jim Barb, Christina Kraybill, John Milleson, Eric Meyer, Betsy Pritchard, David Weiss

Absent: Christy Dunkle, Bryan Conrad

Staff: Lora B. Walburn

1. Call to Order

At 1:00 pm, Chairman John Milleson called the meeting to order.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Under Item 7, Chairman Milleson asked to briefly talk about the December meeting.

**Christina Kraybill, seconded by Jim Barb, moved to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:**

|                    |   |        |
|--------------------|---|--------|
| Jim Barb           | - | Aye    |
| Bryan Conrad       | - | Absent |
| Christy Dunkle     | - | Absent |
| Christina Kraybill | - | Aye    |
| John Milleson      | - | Aye    |
| Eric Myer          | - | Aye    |
| Betsy Pritchard    | - | Aye    |
| David Weiss        | - | Aye    |

3. Introduction of new Executive Director of Berryville Main Street

Christina Kraybill introduced Elizabeth [Lizzie] Ryan, Executive Director of Berryville Main Street. Ms. Ryan provided the following highlights:

- Background is in non-profit administration.
- Also held positions of creative director and a museum director.
- At one time, lived in the Town of Boyce.

- Currently lives in Harpers Ferry.
- Goal is to attract younger tourists from the District of Columbia.
- Will explore locating a charging station for electric cars in Berryville.
- Berryville has a green feel and is very artsy.
- A recent article indicates that millennials prefer refurbished historic areas to malls.

At the suggestion of Betsy Pritchard, members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee introduced themselves.

The Committee exchanged ideas on recharging stations, boutique hotels, and restaurants.

#### 4. Report from Berryville Main Street's Economic Vitality Committee

Christina Kraybill shared the following:

- Boutique Hotel / Lodging:
  - Met with Alan Lefevres, hotel owner and author. When asked by Mrs. Kraybill what was important to an hotel owner, he asked the following questions:
    - High-end restaurants?
    - How many restaurants?
    - How many retail boutiques?
  - Mr. Lefevres was asked to meet with the Vitality Committee this fall to explore and assess revitalization possibilities.
  - Committee is considering asking Mr. Lefevres to conduct a workshop series on being an entrepreneur.
- Shenandoah Valley Local Business Connect:
  - Mary Jo Pellerito heads the group.
  - Group is an attempt to pull more regional businesses into the discussion about being entrepreneurs and an attempt to get them to consider moving their business into one of the Town's or County's vacancies.
  - First meeting conducted last evening at Cordial Coffee.
  - During the meeting, there was an interesting discussion about sidewalk cafés.
- Incubator Space Above the Gallery:
  - Leased to a gemologist, who makes high-end jewelry.
  - Previously she worked from home so she is new to retail.
  - Certain security issues associated with this type of business.

- Also have a yarn shop on the waiting list for the incubator space.

Chairman Milleson initiated discussion of reported labor shortages. General comments include:

- Certain business types may be experiencing greater challenges.
- Restaurants seem to have the greater struggle for a variety of reasons.

## 5. Economic Development Director Update

Len Capelli presented the following update:

- County Fair:
  - Approximately seventy people completed coupons for prizes.
  - All the prizes have been announced.
  - Betsy Pritchard ran the booth the majority of the time. She did an incredible job to ensure everything happened.
- Hydroponics Farm:
  - A vegetable manufacturing company is seeking property in Clarke.
  - Governor McAuliffe supports this type of endeavor.
  - Company understands that it will need to shield its lights. Lights will not turn on until about 1:30 in the morning.
  - Company will grow lettuce in a controlled environment that is GMO free, uses no fertilizer, recycles water using 20% less than if grown in dirt.
  - Anticipate approximately twenty new jobs.
  - Anticipate significant tax revenue.
  - Company eager, willing to demonstrate that it can be a good neighbor.
  - Planning on a 400,000-square-foot facility.
  - David Weiss put forth the County's position on these types of facilities:
    - Considered agriculture as defined by the State falling under "right to farm" limiting the County's ability to regulate.
    - County's attorney will render legal opinion on the County's role.
    - In general, the County agrees that these facilities are good.
    - The County is sensitive to the water, traffic, and lighting issues.
    - Facility would use approximately 50,000 gallons of water daily - comparable to a 1,000-head dairy.
- Spirits Trail and Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership: Both received grants, which will help Clarke get its message out about its organizations.

- VEDP Business Gardening Initiative: C2M recommended and accepted as one of the finalists. It is hoped that it will continue to grow and remain in Berryville.
- WOW:
  - Patrick Barker, Frederick County Economic Development Director, is asking localities in the region to join this program that introduces 7<sup>th</sup> graders to different career opportunities.
  - Program has a board and director.
  - Mr. Capelli expressed his belief that the County should contribute. David Weiss explained the funding request process for Board of Supervisors' consideration during the budget process.
  - Discussed with a Clarke County Public Schools representative at the high school but was not given any direction.
  - Program recognizes that not all students will attend college and hopes to provide career paths.
- Labor Shortages:
  - Local restaurants are experiencing staffing shortages.
  - With staff returning to school, one local restaurant is now open on Saturday only.
  - Some suggestions from Shenandoah Valley Partnership, JOBS Program, and others:
    - Explore a rideshare program.
    - Explore offering housing / dormitory-style living quarters.
    - Len Capelli is discussing with a business acquaintance development of video programs on employee attraction and retention.
    - Ask restaurants to consider extending business hours on nights and weekends to create more desirable hours for customers and staff.
    - Explore job advertising options.
    - Explore providing customer service seminars sponsored by local business owners. Christina Kraybill will suggest this to Patty Maples, Berryville Main Street.
    - Explore training options that cover the full spectrum of food service including fast-food, catering, fine dining, etc.
    - Check job placement organizations working with refugees and immigrants.
    - Recognize that employees typically stay in businesses that pay well and have a good work environment.
    - Explore a social media campaign through the Berryville Main Street office.
- Cidery in Bluemont:
  - Building in which it is currently located has been sold.
  - Christina Kraybill is encouraging the owners to relocate to Berryville.

- Encourage cidery to open a tasting room.
- Vacant Middleburg Bank Location: Look for a business that is open after 5 o'clock in the evening on that corner.
- Social Media:
  - In response to concerns expressed about the Economic Development Director boosting selective promotional activities, he ceased resulting in a decline. To regain momentum:
    - Mr. Capelli is, again, boosting items that benefit the County and Town.
    - Boosted the fabric show this weekend for two days.
    - Boosted the Gathering in October.
    - *Boosting Definition: A boosted post is a post from your business Page that, for a fee, can appear higher up on your audience's News Feeds. The fee depends on how many people you want the post to reach—the payment depends on the number of impressions the post gets with time.*
    - David Weiss asked that boosting be added to the MOU Committee agenda for discussion and policy development.

6. Approval of Minutes

**Jim Barb, seconded by Christina Kraybill, moved to approve the July 19, 2017, minutes as presented. The motion carried as follows:**

|                    |   |        |
|--------------------|---|--------|
| Jim Barb           | - | Aye    |
| Bryan Conrad       | - | Absent |
| Christy Dunkle     | - | Absent |
| Christina Kraybill | - | Aye    |
| John Milleson      | - | Aye    |
| Eric Myer          | - | Aye    |
| Betsy Pritchard    | - | Aye    |
| David Weiss        | - | Aye    |

7. Consideration: Cancellation of Wednesday, November 15, 2017, EDAC Meeting

By consensus, the Board agreed to:

- Meet October 18.
- Cancel the November 15 meeting.
- Conduct the December business tour.

*Approved 10/18/2017*

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 18, 2017.

9. Adjournment

Being no further business, Chairman Milleson adjourned the meeting at 1:49 pm.

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Minutes recorded and transcribed by Lora B. Walburn